



May 20, 1998 *Revised*<sup>1</sup>

**To:** The Record  
Health Facilities Advisory Committee (HFAC)

**From:** Recording Secretary, HFAC

**Subject:** May 6, 1998, HFAC Meeting Minutes

**Members:** \*CAPT Kenneth Harper, P.E., Chairman, IHS/DFEE/ESS  
Wayne Mohler, P.E., IHS/DFEE/ESS (Alternate)  
\*CAPT Jay Farmwald, P.E., Vice-Chairman, IHS/Alaska Area/OEHE  
\* RADM Thomas Gallegos, P.E., Member, IHS/DFEE/ESD  
CAPT Kerry Gragg, P.E., Member, IHS/California Area/OEHE  
CDR George Styer, P.E., Member, IHS/Nashville Area/OEHE  
Mr. Gilbert Harrison, P.E. Member, IHS/Navajo Area/OEHE  
CDR Lee Shands, Member, IHS/Oklahoma City Area  
\*Mr. James Biasco, P.E., Member, IHS/DFEE  
CDR José Cuzme, P.E., Member, IHS/DFEE (\* voting members absent)

**Guests:** John Costantini, IHS/DFEE/ESD

**Introductions:** Meeting via conference call started at 12:08 P.M. There were a total of 8 present, with 6 voting members on the conference call. Minutes of the March 4, meeting were approved.

**Old Business:**

- (1) Applicable IHS base code of reference (HOE--Jesse Sintes, E-Mailed 3/31/98)
  - (a) A/E Guide, III. GENERAL DESIGN REQUIREMENTS--Several additional changes were recommended to the draft document. See the attachment for the final approved section.
  - (b) November HFAC Minutes--This document was inadvertently not forwarded to the HFAC members and will not be considered until next month.
- (2) P-37, Replacement fluorescent lighting (NAIHS--George Styer, E-Mailed 3/18/98)

The draft provides good background information on various high efficiency lighting methods, but it does not give clear directions to instruct designers (lacks specific recommendations). Recommended that this document should include a discussion on the color of lighting in various applications as well as a matrix to give better direction on the selection/application of lighting.

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<sup>1</sup>Additions or corrections made during the discussion on June 3, 1998.

- (3) P-42, Sprinklers monitoring (HOE--Jesse Sintes)  
ESD has submitted additional comments on the proposed chapter. Revised draft not available.
- (4) P-46, Deeplook Survey (ES-Seattle--Wayne Mohler)  
With Gordon Wilcox's retirement being imminent, it was requested that another person, possibly from an Area be assigned to work on this task. Gilbert Harrison, Navajo Area volunteered that he would assign someone from Navajo to work on the issuance. Gilbert also requested information developed to date be sent to him. Current status is that a reformatted draft has been circulated within the committee for comments, and Ken Olson has provided some comments for the committee's consideration. (The scheduled call of 5/06 did not materialize).
- (5) P-47, A/E Selection Guide (ES-Seattle--Dale Burson)  
A draft of the document has been prepared, by Dale Burson. ES-Seattle has two technical eval boards convened and the Board Chairmen will use the draft and finalize the update. The main changes from the 1993 edition are to require licensing (vs registration) of majority of Board members, a revision in the debriefing process, and delegation of selection authority to Area and ES level (from HQ-E). Once exhibits are converted to MS Word/Excel, the document will be distributed. Several HFAC members requested a copy of the draft. Since exhibits are not yet converted, it is proposed no distribution be made until July (approx) when finalized. Members requesting the draft were notified.

**N Business:**

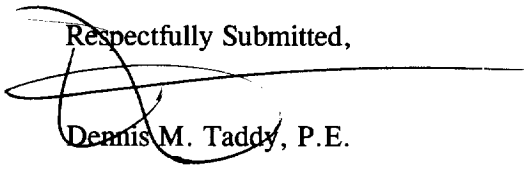
- (1) *P-48, Fire Sprinklers for Quarters (P-15)*--ADM Gallegos has requested this be revisited. ES-D will take the lead on this issue. He also had some concerns on dental (*P-49, Dental HVAC Criteria*). ES-D will be lead on this item also.
- (2) Jay Farmwald will be retiring very soon. It was suggested that his replacement be from Alaska. Jose Cuzme with follow-up Alaska.

**Other Issues:**

- (1) Several members had questions regarding the Omega sprinklers. The information from NIH will be attached to the minutes.
- (2) Next meeting is scheduled for June 3, 1998.

Meeting adjourned at 1:00pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

  
Dennis M. Taddy, P.E.

cc: Members, HFAC (via e-mail)

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Hightower, Daniel [SMTP:HightowD@des13.od.nih.gov]  
**Sent:** Friday, May 23, 1997 1:29 PM  
**To:** Fardig, Paul S.  
**Subject:** FW: Omega Sprinkler Heads

Paul,

This is a rough draft of what we will distribute:

This is an announcement to alert you of a major problem with reference to Omega Sprinkler heads that have been installed in many areas on the NIH campus.

Because of a manufacture design problem with the Omega sprinkler head, it has been found that up to 40% or more of the heads fail and will not operate in a fire! The Omega heads are flush with the ceiling and extend down when exposed to the heat of a fire and spray out water. The problem is that many of the units stick and do not extend out to release the water spray. The heads should pop out at about 10 psi water pressure when their heat sensor is melted, but even with over 200 psi pressure they can stick--thus no fire protection.

**Recommended Action:** Send a letter to the Omega Sprinkler Co. today asking them to replace sprinkler heads at no cost to your organization. They are doing this at the Fairfax, VA, NOVA hospital now. This is in line with advice from the NIH/OGC. Clear your letters with your agency OGC.

\*\*\*\*Alert your facility managers \*\*\*\*\*

Additional testing is not necessary. The defect is consistent, widespread and only worsening as information is being obtained.

Fairfax NOVA Hospital recently had all 1,512 sprinkler heads replaced by Central. A five person replacement crew completed the work in 3 ½ weeks.

Information on the Omega sprinkler head includes:

1) Notice from State of Maryland Fire Marshall Cease & Desist for the sale, installation and distribution of certain omega heads in the state of MD. This is based on reports of up to 45% failure rate of random sample tests. This includes heads manufactured since about 1983 but prior to June 1996 for the models: C-1, C-1A, R-1, R-1A, R-1M, EC-20, EC-20A, Model M Upright, Model M Pendent, Model M Sidewall, HEC-12, HEC-20, Prohibitor C-1A, Prohibitor EC-20A, Prohibitor HEC-12, Flow Control Pendent Flush, Flow Control Pendent Omega sprinkler heads.

2) Marriott has replaced all heads in all properties.

3) Intel has replaced all heads in all properties worldwide. IRI found 30% failure.

4) Veterans Admin is replacing in various hospitals. Over 30% failure.

5) Rolf Jensen is recommending replacement in New York mental health system & NY dormitory authority. Close to 40% failure.

6) Fairfax County VA is testing all buildings in Fairfax. Major hospital is replacing all. Close to 40% failure.

7) Sheraton Hotels replaced all heads in Phoenix and Hawaii.

8) Consumer Safety Board of the Federal Trade Commission is starting an investigation as result of complaint from the North American Fire Marshalls Association.

9) There is a report of two fires in other states where failure of this type sprinkler head was confirmed.

In summary, based on the available information NIH legal recommends the following:

1) We begin immediate replacement of ALL Omega Sprinkler Heads noted above, and NOT wait for additional testing before starting.

2) We remove all the noted Omega heads from the NIH Guidelines.

3) Sending a letter to Central Sprinkler to reserve our rights for reimbursement.

Hope this helps,